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1956 TOURIST COURTESY STATION ANNUAL REPORT



PUBLISHED BY
MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION

Travel and
Advertising Dept.

Helena
Montana

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1956

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INTRODUCTION

For some time it has been evident that, while Montana's car counting system is one of the best, it is still far from perfect.

This fact has been pointed up this year especially. We know, from many sources, that the tourist business in 1956 was better than in 1955. However, the increased business this year is not reflected in the reports of Montana's Tourist Courtesy Stations.

For instance, estimates from the national parks, the State Capitol, museums, and other places where tourists are counted place the increase in tourists above last year from 6% to 12%. The cars counted by the Tourist Courtesy Stations were about the same as last year.

There may be many reasons for this difference, but one factor at least appears prominent: the human element involved in counting non-stopping cars at the Courtesy Stations.

While many of the station attendants are conscientious, it appears from spot checks that, on the average, one-fourth of all the non-stopping cars passing the stations are missed by the attendants, and are therefore not shown in the station totals.

In the past, the ratio of non-stopping cars to stopping cars held fairly constant. This year, however, for the first time, the number of non-stopping cars more than doubled. This, we believe, was due to the change of signs at the approaches to the Courtesy Stations, removing the implication that it was mandatory for tourists to stop.

Because of the great increase in non-stopping cars, we can reasonably suppose a comparable increase in cars missed by the attendants.

Assuming that in both 1955 and 1956, attendants missed one-fourth of the non-stopping cars, the following cars would not have been counted.

In 1955 -- 26,989 cars missed
In 1956 -- 55,505 cars missed

On this basis, 28,516 additional cars were missed in 1956, due to the increased proportion of non-stopping cars.

If this number -- 28,516 cars -- is added to the total cars counted for 1956, the new total would be 359,336 cars -- or an increase of 6.2% over the 1955 car count. (This figure does not include what we assume to be the base number of cars missed in both years, but only the increase in cars missed due to the increase in non-stops.)

Undoubtedly there are other factors which contributed to the failure of the 1956 counts to show the increase in tourist travel which was actually noted in the state, but perhaps the largest single factor may be the human error in counting passing cars.



TOURIST COURTESY STATION REPORT - 1956

Montana's 1956 tourist traffic dropped slightly from the record year of 1955, statistics from the state's 13 tourist courtesy stations and U.S. Customs reveal. Traffic counts are for the period from June 9 through September 3, 1956.

The Montana stations showed a gain of 570 cars but U.S. Customs stations on the Montana-Canada border reported 10,758 less vehicles than the previous year. The drop occurred at the Sweet Grass station, which reported 28,720 cars in 1955 and only 15,268 in 1956, a difference of 13,452 vehicles.

Summarized, the 1956 report for June 9 - September 3, 1956 reveals the following:

Total cars counted	330,820
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Total passengers counted in stopping cars	538,625
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By comparison, the 1955 report was as follows:

Total cars counted	338,880
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Total passengers counted in stopping cars	810,595
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Car counts include both stopping and non-stopping cars. Passenger counts include only passengers actually counted in stopping cars.

The difference in total passengers between 1955 and 1956 can be attributed to the fact fewer cars stopped to permit a passenger count. This was due directly to new signs which were erected 1,000 feet ahead of the stations. They read "Tourist Courtesy Station, 1,000 Feet, All Tourists Please Stop."

The polite "Please" made it optional for tourists to stop and early reports indicated the largest percentage were driving past. The "Please" later was eliminated and was replaced by "All Tourists STOP," similar to signs used in 1955. Counts of stopping cars increased immediately. Naturally counts of passengers did also.

The 1956 statistics reveal a 2.4% decrease in tourist traffic for the three-month period.



HOW COUNTS ARE MADE

The Montana Highway Commission increased the number of tourist courtesy stations from 11 to 13 in 1956. New stations were erected on Highway 93 at Medicine Springs and on Highway 212 at Broadus. Other stations are located at Saltese on Highway 10; Noxon, Highway 10A; Troy, Highway 2; West Yellowstone, Highway 191, Gardiner, Highway 89; Wibaux, Highway 10; Culbertson, Highway 2, Baker, Highway 12; Rockvale, Highway 12 and 310; Crow Agency, Highway 87 and Lima, Highway 91.

Station attendants work every day from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. during the three-month period. They count each car entering the station, note the license it carries and count every passenger in each stopping car. They also count every out-of-state car which fails to stop. As official greeters, their duties include distributing Montana highway maps and other literature, reporting on road conditions and discussing with tourists the things to see and do while in Montana.

Attendants prepare daily work sheets and from these determine their week-by-week totals. They are required to send an accurate report to the Advertising Office each week. From the summary of these reports the office keeps abreast of how summer traffic is developing.



ASSISTANCE FROM U.S. CUSTOMS

Montana has no tourist courtesy stations along its border with Canada. Because of the cooperation of the U.S. Treasury Department Bureau of Customs, the State Advertising Office is able to include statistics showing Canadian traffic entering Montana through the Customs stations.

CANADIAN TOTALS DROP

Travel from Canada during the period June 9 - September 3, 1956 fell off 16%, according to statistics provided by the U.S. Treasury Department Bureau of Customs. Total cars was 57,454 in 1956 compared to 68,212 a year ago, a difference of 10,758 vehicles. Total passengers was 199,029 compared to 223,409 in 1955.

The 1956 total is approximately the same as it was in 1953 when 57,827 Canadian cars were counted at the Customs stations and shows a slight increase over 1954 when 54,137 vehicles were counted.

Some of the Canadian cars also passed through the Montana courtesy stations, thus were counted twice. It has been necessary, therefore, to discount the Canadian totals by 19%. This figure is explained in the Summary of the Courtesy Station Report.



TRAFFIC REPORT FROM MONTANA STATIONS

Montana's stations in 1956 showed an increase of 570 cars over 1955. Attendants counted 275,817 vehicles as compared with 275,247 a year ago.

By stations, traffic was as follows:

Saltese, the busiest station, reported 58,574 autos or 21.2% of the total traffic. This was a decrease of 3,680 cars from 1955.

West Yellowstone reported 36,732 autos or 13.3% of total traffic. This was an increase of 1,340 cars over 1955.

Wibaux, becoming the third most important station in 1955, reported 25,385 autos, 9.2% of total traffic. This was 3,624 less cars than were counted here in 1955.

Gardiner reported 24,499 or 8.9% of total traffic. This was 4,560 less cars than was reported in 1955.

Troy reported 22,945 autos or 8.3% of total traffic. This was an increase of 576 cars over 1955.

Rockvale reported 22,445 cars, 8.1% of total traffic and an increase of 411 cars over 1955.

Crow Agency reported 21,144 autos, 7.7% of total traffic and 695 cars less than in 1955.

Culbertson reported 19,320 autos, 7.0% of total traffic and a decrease of 3,088 cars from 1955. The station was closed for 10 days because of highway construction and no counts were made during that period.

Baker reported 11,586 cars, 4.2% of total traffic and 624 cars less than 1955.

Lima reported 11,182 autos, 4.1% of total traffic and an increase of 1,812 cars over 1955.

Noxon reported 10,722 cars or 3.9% of total traffic. This was an increase of 1,419 autos over 1955.

Medicine Springs, a new station, reported 5,983 autos or 2.2% of total traffic.

Broadus, also a new station, reported 5,300 autos or 1.9% of total traffic.



THE 10 BIG STATES

The 10 states from which Montana drew most of its tourists remain much the same as in previous years. In order they are Washington, California, Minnesota, Idaho, Oregon, Illinois, Utah, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. North Dakota, the No. 9 state in 1955, slipped to twelfth behind Texas in 1956.

Of interest is the fact Montana was represented at travel shows in seven of the states mentioned--Washington, California, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa and Texas.

TOURIST VEHICLE COUNT BY MONTHS

Here is how tourist traffic developed during the 12 weeks Montana's courtesy stations were open, June 9 - September 3, 1956. These figures do not reflect U.S. Customs counts.

	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>
Vehicles	62,461	95,703	96,194	21,459
% of Travel	22.6%	34.7%	34.9%	7.8%



1956 COURTESY STATION VEHICLE AND PASSENGER COUNTS*

(NOTE: Stations at Medicine Springs and Broadus were new in 1956.)

<u>Station Location</u>	<u>% of Travel</u>	<u>Vehicles</u>		<u>Passengers</u>	
		<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>
Saltese	21.2	58,574	62,254	75,104	146,218
West Yellowstone	13.3	36,732	35,392	36,843	86,723
Wibaux	9.2	25,385	29,009	40,984	62,535
Gardiner	8.9	24,499	29,059	57,160	75,363
Troy	8.3	22,945	22,369	26,625	43,216
Rockvale	8.1	22,445	22,034	10,114	35,223
Crow Agency	7.7	21,144	21,839	15,065	41,232
Culbertson	7.0	19,320	22,408	25,963	44,017
Baker	4.2	11,586	12,210	17,699	26,132
Lima	4.1	11,182	9,370	11,614	21,346
Noxon	3.9	10,722	9,303	11,920	19,950
Medicine Springs	2.2	5,983	-	12,075	-
Broadus	<u>1.9</u>	<u>5,300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,443</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL	100.0	275,817	275,247	347,609	601,955

* Passengers shown here are those actually counted in stopping cars. Vehicle counts include both stopping and non-stopping cars. Reports from U.S. Customs regarding Canadian traffic do not reflect in these figures.



TOURIST TRAVEL BY STATES
Vehicle Count
1956

<u>STATE</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1955</u>
1. Washington	17,400	32,209
2. California	15,824	22,675
3. Minnesota	7,446	13,181
4. Idaho	5,325	11,624
5. Oregon	5,223	9,191
6. Illinois	4,557	8,786
7. Utah	3,377	5,661
8. Michigan	3,008	5,741
9. Wisconsin	2,892	5,404
10. Iowa	2,694	4,743
11. Texas	2,654	4,666
12. North Dakota	2,572	5,466
13. Colorado	2,534	4,267
14. Ohio	1,989	3,734
15. Kansas	1,760	3,443
16. South Dakota	1,557	3,304
17. Missouri	1,438	2,849
18. Indiana	1,435	2,869
19. New York	1,432	2,886
20. Nebraska	1,405	2,991
21. Wyoming	1,262	3,546
22. Pennsylvania	1,060	2,061
23. Oklahoma	1,036	1,736
24. Arizona	878	1,372
25. New Jersey	693	1,254
26. Florida	663	1,260
27. New Mexico	557	764
28. Nevada	548	749
29. Massachusetts	447	789
30. Virginia	425	722
31. Maryland	348	746
32. Tennessee	255	503
33. Connecticut	253	455
34. North Carolina	234	478
35. Louisiana	217	511
36. Alabama	188	397
37. Arkansas	180	372
38. Georgia	172	388
39. Kentucky	172	417
40. Mississippi	160	272
41. West Virginia	128	243
42. South Carolina	95	236
43. Washington D. C.	93	185
44. Rhode Island	85	180
45. New Hampshire	79	127
46. Maine	78	130
47. Vermont	66	194
48. Delaware	48	119
Non-stopping cars	165,495 60%	79,261 28%
Canada	12,899	19,080
Foreign	481	1,010
TOTAL CARS	275,817	275,247



CANADIAN CARS AND PASSENGERS

The following statistics are provided by the Bureau of Customs for the period from June 9 - September 3, 1956. They show Canadian cars and passengers entering Montana through the Customs stations on the Canada-Montana border. The 1955 totals are given for comparison.

<u>Port of Entry</u>	<u>1956</u>		<u>1955</u>	
	<u>Cars</u>	<u>Passengers</u>	<u>Cars</u>	<u>Passengers</u>
Piegan	16,200	55,728	13,789	47,131
Sweet Grass	15,268	53,438	28,720	88,523
Chief Mountain	8,200	29,309	5,880	19,580
Raymond	6,175	19,427	7,958	27,001
Morgan	2,249	7,252	2,363	8,212
Havre	1,827	6,211	1,923	5,918
Roosville	1,779	6,085	1,448	5,869
Turner	1,452	4,713	1,175	4,171
Opheim	1,321	4,686	1,416	4,774
Whitetail	1,253	6,079	1,683	5,879
Scobey	1,193	4,356	1,277	4,558
Del Bonita	311	996	326	1,011
Whitlash	<u>226</u>	<u>749</u>	<u>254</u>	<u>782</u>
TOTALS	57,454	199,029	68,212	223,409



FOREIGN CARS & PASSENGERS - 1956

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>NO. CARS</u>	<u>NO. PASSENGERS</u>
Alaska	269	853
Hawaii	79	262
Germany	35	112
England	14	40
Canal Zone	12	48
Japan	9	27
France	9	24
Yukon	6	20
Nova Scotia	6	19
Okinawa	5	13
Philippines	3	13
Guam	3	10
New Brunswick	3	10
U.S. Forces in Germany	3	10
Cuba	2	16
Australia	2	7
Newfoundland	2	6
Panama	2	6
Mexico	2	4
Brazil	1	5
Chile	1	5
Belgium	1	4
Central America	1	4
Italy	1	4
Lebanon	1	4
Northwest Territory	1	4
Prince Edward Island	1	4
Europe International	1	3
Sweden	1	3
Holland	1	2
Pakistan	1	2
Puerto Rico	1	2
Switzerland	1	2
Turkey	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
TOTALS	481	1,549



SUMMARY

By checking all questionnaire cards returned to the State Advertising Office by Canadian visitors it was found that 19% of the Canadians entering at a Montana tourist courtesy station also entered through a Customs station, thus were counted twice. To avoid duplication, total Canadian cars counted at the Montana stations was reduced 19%. Remaining cars were added to the total Canadian cars reported by Customs. Total vehicles and total passengers, therefore, is as follows:

VEHICLES

Cars counted at Montana courtesy stations exclusive of Canadian cars.	262,918
Canadian cars counted at Montana courtesy stations.	12,899
Less 19% cars counted at both Montana and Customs stations.	<u>2,451</u> 10,448
Canadian cars counted by Customs.	57,454
Total Canadian cars.	<u>67,902</u>
Total cars for 1956 tourist season.	330,820

PASSENGERS

Total passengers at Montana stations exclusive of Canadians.	305,433
Total Canadians counted at Montana stations.	42,176
Less 19% of Canadians counted at both Montana and Customs stations.	<u>8,013</u> 34,163
Total Canadians counted at Customs.	199,029
Total Canadians.	<u>233,192</u>
Total passengers counted.	538,625

NOTE: Vehicle counts include both stopping and non-stopping cars. Passenger counts show passengers in stopping cars only.





